

## AN INSCRIPTION OF AMISUS

G. E. BEAN

The inscription published below came to light recently during the progress of the new harbour-works at Samsun. It was brought to my attention by a student of the University of Istanbul, and the photograph (Pl. 1) was kindly furnished at my request by my friend and former pupil B. Şadi Usal of Samsun. The latter informs me further that in the area of the harbour-construction a number of human skeletons were unearthed, together with small figurines, vases of various sizes, and silver coins; no inscriptions were found except that here published.

The stone is a marble block measuring 0,53 m. in height, 1.10 m. in width, and 0,10 m. in thickness. The inscription, in letters 4.5—5 cm. high, is carefully written; but the quality of the engraving is not commensurate with the importance of the monument. Of the letter-forms, the unusual and rather unpleasing shape of *kappa* is noteworthy.

[N]έρωνα Κλαύδιον Καίσαρα  
Σεβαστὸν Γερμανικόν,  
Σεβαστὴν Ποππαίαν,  
Τιβέριον Κλαύδιον Βρεταννικόν,  
5 ὁ δῆμος διὰ τῆς ἐπιμελείας  
Λουκίου Εἰλουτίου Ποτείτου καὶ τῶν  
συναρχόντων

The stone is not itself a statue-base, being only 10 cm. thick: it evidently formed part of a larger monument which carried the three statues in question.

Poppaea Sabina, second wife of the Emperor Nero, married to him in A. D. 62, received the title of Augusta in 63 and died two years later in 65. The present monument is accordingly dated between these years, and was no doubt put in hand as soon as the tidings of the new Augusta reached Amisus. The remarkable circumstance is the addition of Britannicus to the royal pair. On the accession of Nero in A. D. 54 it was felt by many that Britannicus, the natural son of

Claudius, had a better claim to the throne than the adopted son Nero: the new Emperor, feeling his position insecure, caused Britannicus to be poisoned in the following year 55. The association of Britannicus, eight years after his death, with Nero and his new wife is therefore surprising in the extreme, and it is not easy to imagine what reasons can have led the Amisians to bring these three persons into such incongruous juxtaposition. Nero had of course never admitted responsibility for the murder of Britannicus, but had professed to grieve for the loss of a dear brother; it is perhaps conceivable that the present inscription was intended as a sort of assurance to the Emperor that his version of the affair was believed. Or perhaps the Amisians really believed it.

The inscription is further interesting for the occurrence in 1.6 of the *nomen* Ejutius, previously known only from an inscription of this same region, now in the museum at Sinop.<sup>1</sup> In view of its rather peculiar form and its non-occurrence elsewhere, it had hitherto been supposed to be an error: its reappearance at the neighbouring Amisus proves both its genuine existence and its local associations in the first and second centuries.

οἱ συνάρχοντες is a general term applicable to any board of magistrates, whatever their exact title; it is not therefore necessary to suppose that Potitus held the office of πρώτος ἄρχων, though this is not unlikely to have been the case.

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<sup>1</sup> *Rev. Arch.* 1916, 354, no. 10; republished *Bulleten* XVII, 66 (1953) 161, no. 12; Μ. Ειούτιος Μαρακκιανός 'Ρούφος παράδοξος Σινωπεύς πύκτης. Second century A. D.



Res. 1 — Pl. 1

